



Telling your story

Publicity guidance for grantees

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Introduction

Congratulations on receiving a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund!

Using media (print, online and digital) to talk about your project is a great way of celebrating your success, letting the public know about your heritage project and how National Lottery players' money is being spent.

This publicity guidance document is designed to help you publicise your grant. If you need further advice and support, please contact [HLF's Communications team](#). And remember, clearly acknowledging and promoting your HLF funding is part of your contract with us.



Announcing your grant

As soon as you receive your permission to start letter from HLF you are free to announce your grant to the media. To help you, we've enclosed press release templates with this guidance. Once you have decided on an announcement date, please let your grants officer know so they can tell the Communications team.

Make a plan

- Think about your messages and your audiences - **who** are you communicating with and **why**?
- How do you want them to **feel** about your project?
- Do you have a **call to action** for example needing their help with volunteering or fundraising? If so, include it in your communications.
- Put together a list of **who needs to know** and how and when you will tell them your news. This can include local media and your own key stakeholders



The press release

A press release is a written statement to the media. Journalists use these to create their own stories for print, TV, radio and online. A press release is written like a news story and includes further details, including contact details, in a section at the end called 'Notes to Editors'.

Please use the [press release templates](#) on the HLF website as guides when writing your release. You can even just fill in the blanks. It includes all the right wording and HLF's correct Notes to Editors paragraph. Remember to keep it short and snappy and use simple, enthusiastic language - avoiding jargon.

Remember to send your press release to your grants officer a week before you plan to send it out so we can approve it. If we know when it's going out, we can be ready to spread the news too. Ideally, please give us three working days to approve a press release.




Handy hints for a press release

Keep your title to **six words or under**.

Put all the most **important information at the top**. For example the grant amount, what it's to be used for, who will benefit and your location.

Make sure to include HLF's logo. [Visit our website](#) to download the logo.

Supported by
The National Lottery
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



<<Insert your organisation's logo>>

Embargoed until 00.01 hours on (insert date)

<<Project name/name of organisation>> wins Heritage Lottery Fund support

<<Name of organisation>> has received initial support* from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for the <<name of project>> project, it was announced today. The project aims to <<main aims of project>>. Development funding of £XX, XXX has also been awarded to help <<name of organisation>> progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

The building is a focal point for the local community and is currently used by over 60 community groups. It was built in <<year>> and has been used as <<various purposes>> over the years <<continue with more historical information>>.

Bill Elliot from Elinton & Creswell Parish Council said: "We're delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this support. The social centre has given the village a place for live entertainment, public meetings and large group activities for the past 100 years, and it's great to know that we are a step closer to preserving it for another century."

Explaining the importance of the HLF support, <<name of HLF regional manager>> said, "The heritage centre provides a great insight into the varied heritage of the local area. Its fascinating collections will now be available for more people to learn about. HLF is pleased to support this worthwhile project."

ENDS

Notes to editors

About <<name of grantee organisation>>
<<Insert information about your organisation>>

About the Heritage Lottery Fund
Thanks to National Lottery players, we invest money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife. www.hlf.org.uk @heritagelottery

For further information, images and interviews, please contact:
<< Name and title >> at << organisation >> on << telephone number and email address>>

Your press release is a great way to **thank National Lottery players**. Please mention that the project is 'thanks to' or 'made possible by' National Lottery players. Without them we couldn't support your project.

Don't forget to add the Twitter hashtag **#HLFsupported**

Who should I contact?

News reaches people in different ways - from television to newspapers and from radio to social media.

Although traditional print media (local, daily/weekly newspapers) is still important, digital channels are increasingly becoming a major source of news for many people, especially social media outlets such as Twitter.

- Think about who your project would appeal too and what media outlets your target audiences will be interested in.
- Is it particularly visual story with good images?
- Does it involve young people or volunteers?
- Does it have a particular theme e.g. parks/wildlife/archaeology/First World War?

Use this information to find out what media is available in your area and don't forget local blogs/ online-only news sources, local radio and social media channels. Speaking to a journalist/blogger can help to get you noticed so make sure to give them a call. You can usually find the phone number or email address for the news desk on their website. In the case of radio and TV, ask to speak to the forward planning desk.

Journalists/bloggers don't have much time, so you need to grab their attention quickly. Make sure your press release/news story is ready to go via email, with a short and snappy headline and the copy pasted into the message rather than enclosed as an attachment. Once you've sent it out, make sure it's uploaded to your website if you have one, with our logo included, and broadcast on your social media channels.



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Social media

Social media is a fantastic way to speak directly to your audience and reach new ones. There are many different tools you can use that provide a quick and effective way to spread the word. HLF can be found on [Twitter](#), [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#). We can support your news through our Twitter account for each region/country in the UK so make sure to find and follow your local feed as well as the national **@heritagelottery** channel. Remember to send us any stand-out images and films made as a result of your project and we can upload it to our Flickr or YouTube channel.

It's important that you acknowledge your National Lottery grant and thank National Lottery players on social media as well as in traditional print and broadcast sources. We've put together a suggested tweet you could adapt and use for when the news of your project goes live:

Brilliant news! We've been awarded £xx from @heritagelottery for our heritage project thanks to money raised by National Lottery players!

Here at HLF we use a variety of different hashtags for tweeting about our projects. Please do incorporate the most relevant one into your tweets about us/your project:

General

- **#LoveHeritage**
- **#HLFsupported**
- **#ChangingLives**

Programme specific

- **#youngroots**
- **#HeritageEnterprise**
- **#UnderstandingFWW**
- **#WW1**
- **#parksmatter**

Tips:

- Images and film footage can make a tweet more interesting and encourage interaction from the public. Pick images that are bright and in focus. Remember that images/videos take up characters.
- The first tweet about a project is often the most popular so remember to include any calls to action/links you want people to see and aim to send it first thing in the morning.
- You can pin important tweets you want to highlight to the top of your Twitter page.
- Remember you can include hashtags within the tweet and not just at the end.
- Don't use too many hashtags or exclamation marks.
- Twitter has its own analytics to help you measure success - they're really simple to use and are clearly signposted on your feed.

Giving interviews

Sometimes you will be invited to do a media interview about your project on TV or radio. Agree in advance who the best person is from your organisation to do the interview, and think about three key points that you want to get across.

Plan carefully what you want to say but remain flexible so that you sound natural and enthusiastic. You can always ask the journalist in advance what sort of questions they may ask. If it's a radio interview, find out if it's live or pre-recorded. Again, please let us know in advance if you have lined up any interviews as we can often offer someone from HLF to speak too. Remember to credit HLF and the National Lottery where appropriate during the interview.



Getting visual

Print, online and social media channels always appreciate an interesting and eye-catching image to bring the story to life. Remember to send any good quality photos and films relating to the project out alongside your press release and upload them to your digital channels. Please send them us too and we can put them on our [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#) channels, on our [website](#) and [tweet](#) them.

Our logos need to be included on everything relating to our funding including on your website, on flyers and posters, and any other items you produce. You can find all the [relevant information and logos to download on our website](#).

Keep everyone posted... ...including us

There is much more to your project than just receiving the grant and the final opening event. The media is often interested to know when a project has a significant milestone event or has unearthed a fascinating piece of heritage/ brought a great personal story to life. Make sure you keep them posted on your project's progress – you can do this in a variety of ways, by sending a follow-up press release/ news story or tweeting them directly are just a couple of examples.

Here at HLF, we're also always on the lookout for any exciting project news you have, especially human interest stories (stories about real people often get the best media exposure).

- Has your project made a really big difference to the local community?
- Has anyone in particular benefitted from the funding in terms of training or volunteering opportunities?
- Has it enabled someone to get back into work/ learn a new skill?
- Has it changed someone's life in some way?

[Visit our website](#) to see examples of some of the stories we've told from our projects and let us know if you think you might have a good case study to share.

Contacting your MP or other local politicians

Don't forget that there may be strong support and increased awareness gained by making sure your MP or other local politicians, such as Members of the Scottish Parliament, Members of the Welsh, Northern Ireland or London Assembly, local councillors or Mayors, know about your project. You should consider inviting them to endorse your project within the press release through a quote, or get them involved in a photo call moment if you think they could help.

See if your local MP is on Twitter and if so tweet them with news of your project. If your project has an opening, community event or reception, consider inviting your local MP. HLF has a Government and Parliamentary Relations team that can assist with advice and guidance on the best way forward to go about this. An easy way to find out who your local MP is and their contact details is to use the [Parliament UK website](#) or this website called [theyworkforyou.com](#).

Join our online community

On our website you'll find our Online Community. Here you'll find a space to connect, network, discuss issues and share knowledge related to your HLF project with others in a similar position.

We have a General Discussions forum, as well as dedicated forums about Landscape Partnerships, Skills for the Future, Resilient Heritage and projects involving young people, so make sure to join in the conversation.



Criticism

National Lottery investment needs to demonstrate clear public benefits at a local level and we need to ensure we accurately describe how we're using National Lottery players' money.

Always keep in mind local sensitivities when announcing your grant. Ensure that the name and the description of your project accurately reflect what it will deliver, and that they don't sound frivolous. Try to avoid announcing your grant if you know that a major piece of local 'bad' news is coming out – such as job cuts or cuts to services.

The same applies to dealing with criticism on social media, including Trip Advisor. If appropriate, acknowledge the complaint but try to take the correspondence offline as things can be dealt with easier that way and not in the public domain.

We are always on hand to provide advice on handling negative media coverage or questions that are clearly negative in tone. There is usually an effective way to manage media stories if we work together.

And finally...

Please remember to let us know of any particularly good stories that come out of your project, we're interested in your whole project journey, not just the start and finish. Don't forget to follow us on Twitter, Flickr and YouTube to keep up with and share the latest news from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

